SHE MERELY LAUGHED.

I had rented a small bungalow for the summer, and settled down with the idea of doing a lot of work. After six weeks I discovered one morning that one small canvas—a study of a hayrick—was the sole result of my strenuous hour by hour resolve.

I sat down to my breakfast, determined that I would set to work the moment it was over.

"Letters, sir," said Spicer.

They were a dull lot. I turned to a weekly paper that had come by post. It seemed even more smart than usual this week—in many instances more smart than discreet. At the top of the second age I saw a paragraph which made me knock my cup of coffee off the table.

At first I was annoyed. I got up and lit a cigarette. Then I read the paragraph again and chuckled. It had its humorous side.

I dropped the paper on a veranda chair and entered the house to get ready for my morning ride. In a few minutes I came out again. Spicer, meanwhile, had taken my horse round to the front.

He looked at me nervously.

"If you'll pardon the liberty, sir," he began, "I should like to offer you my early congratulations."

I stared at him in surprise. "It's very good of you, Spicer," I said, bewildered, "but—"

"It just happened to glance at the newspaper, sir, and—"

The explanation came on with a rush.

"Thanks, Spicer, thanks!" I said hurriedly. "Run and fetch the paper."

It was distinctly too precious to be allowed to lie about. I put it in my pocket.

* * * * * * *

I turned down the lane that leads to Halestone Common. As I went round a sharp corner I nearly ran into a lady, who was bicycling along calmly a good dozen ahead.

"I beg your ——. Oh; good morning, Miss Warrender."

"I notice you don't think it necessary to continue the apology you began," she said, with a smile.

"Are you going to Halestone?"

"Yes, I said I was going for a ride, and Mrs. Cranford asked me if I minded fetching a paper for her; the boy's small people forgot to send it."

We rode together along the edge of the common.

"And how is Mrs. Cranford?"

"Well, the non-arrival of this paper has rather upset her. She reads it every week. This morning she wouldn't eat her breakfast because the Looker-On had not come."

"Does Mrs. Cranford read that?" I queried.

Miss Warrender looked at me in astonishment.

"Of course; most people do. Don't you?"

"Oh, yes," I replied. "I read it. Amusing paper, isn't it?"

"A trifle 'rapid,' but its facts are generally all right."

I laughed.

"By the way," I said, "I have a copy of this week's in my pocket. There are some good things in it. Shall I read you one or two?"

"Yes—if they are good."

I glanced at the top of the page and read: "We hear that Mr. Austin Hayter, the well known landscape painter—"

"Gross flattery!" said Miss Warrender.

I gave her a severe glance.

"—is about to be married."

She clapped her hands. "Most amusing," she said.

"The future Mrs. Hayter is that charming actress, Miss Esme Warrender, who made such a success in—"

She jumped off her machine, and snatched the paper from my hand.

* * * * * * *

"You don't mean to say—" she began. She read the paragraph herself.

"What does it all mean?" she exclaimed, in a bewildered fashion.

"I haven't the least idea. Rather good, isn't it?"

She broke into a nervous little laugh.

"I never heard anything so ridiculous. What could induce them to say a wicked thing like that?"

"Usually their facts are all right," I reminded her gently.

She was silent for a little while.

"Of course, it's absurd," she said at length, "yet it might be embarrassing. How could they couple your name with mine?"

"I don't know! Of course, I've been up at the Grange a good deal. You've been there, too. Circumstances have compelled us to play tennis, ride, and dance together. It's very unfortunate!"

"Has the 'Looker-On' a large circulation?"

"Enormous. My man Spicer has congratulated me already."

"Look!" she cried. "Who is this coming down the hill?"

"It's young Archie!"

He approached rapidly. A mischievous grin spread over his face as he recognized us.

"Bless you, my children," he cried, giving a wave of his hand as he raced by.

"Nice boy, Archie," I said meditatively.

"I'd wish he'd puncture," said Miss Warrender. I turned to her.

"We both know Archie. In an hour everybody will have heard that 'Esme has fixed it up with old Hayter,' and they're spooning in Halestone lane.' "

"Yes, yes," she cried, with a shudder. "He will say 'spooning' for certain."

I put the paper back in my pocket.

"We might send a contradiction," I said.

"Yes" (after reflection), "we might; but the mischief is done!"

* * * * * * *

There was a clatter of hoofs on the road. I turned my head and saw a horseman coming towards us. He drew rein as he came up. It was old Mr. Sinclair.

"Good morning, Miss Warrander," he said, cheerfully. "Ah, Hayter, how d'ye do? I've just met Archie; he has told me the news. Accept the hearty congratulations of an old man. I think you're admirably suited to one another."

Miss Warrender shot an appealing glance at me.

"Thank you, but the fact is—er!" I stammered.

"Sorry I can't stop—I'm behind time already. Good-by, and good luck!"

We went on in silence. Presently we met a boy with papers on his arm. Miss Warrender stopped him.

"Have you the 'Looker-On' for the Grange?"

He nodded.

"I will take it myself."

"Thank you, miss." The boy eyed us and began to grin. A horrible suspicion dawned upon me.

"I 'ope as 'ow you'll be 'appy, miss," he murmured, as he turned back.

The next moment Mrs. Cranford came round a corner. Archie was close behind.

"Oh, Esme," she said, "I am so glad. Nothing could have pleased me better."

I looked across at Esme. She caught my glance and smiled. I made a sudden determination.

"Do you think it worth while fighting against it?"

I had tried to speak the words indifferently. I fancy I did not succeed. Esme hesitated for a moment.

"It seems almost an impossible task, I suppose we had better give in," she replied, softly.

Mrs. Cranford looked up in astonishment.

"Whatever are you talking about?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing—that is, fate," I said, incoherently.

Mrs. Cranford and Archie soon found they must be getting on. I had dismounted.

Esme and I stood looking at one another over her bicycle.

"Think of the trouble it will save!" I pleaded. "No further explanations will be necessary."

She merely laughed. Never had the loneliness of Halestone Common struck me in so favorable a light.

For Clever Little Girls.

The next time anyone in your family breaks a piece of china, do not throw away the pieces, but save them carefully. If the piece broken should be a large plate, it will be especially valuable to you, although anything of the sort will be of use.

If you have no paints of your own, wait until the family have some painting done about the house. Then get a little of the paint and a small brush.

For five cents you can buy at any grocery store a small package of china cement. This will fasten together the edges of the broken china until the plate or other piece looks as good as new. However, it would not do to use it as it had never been broken, for very little use would smash it altogether, but for ornamental uses it is all right.

Cut from any old magazine the prettiest figure you can find. It must be of silhouette figure, that is, profile. You will find a large variety, especially in the advertising pages. Paste several of these figures lightly over the bottom of the plate, or if the object broken be a pitcher or cup, all over the outside surface. Now paint over the whole thing, pictures and all, with your paint, putting on a good thick coat.

Before the paint is dry, loosen with a pin the edges of the pictures you have pasted on the china. Now strip them all off, being careful not to smudge the edges. Of course there will be no paint on the china where it was covered with the pictures, and the outlines of the pictures will show in white against its surrounding background of paint.

The plate, thus prepared, will make a very dainty and attractive ornament, and you will find it lots of fun making this novel use of old bits of china.

Literary Lady (angrily)—If she asks for me, tell her I'm out of town. (She resumes writing.) "When we in any way deceive a child, we not only set a pernicious example, but we are likely also to lose our influence over him forever."

Raw Meat and Civilization.

To feed a creature on raw meat has not been generally considered the best way to render it amiable and gentle. According to M. Houssay, a French experimenter, however, this is precisely the result that such food has on the domestic fowl. His results would appear to be contrary to all received ideas on the subject. They were first given to the public in the Journal de Psychology Normale et Pathologique, and the following abstract appears in the Revue Scientifique (July 23):

"We generally think of a meat diet as making the eater less sociable, more energetic and more ferocious. Now, in the course of a series of experiments carried on for several years, in which chickens were fed with raw meat, M. Houssay has demonstrated a contrary result—a most curious thing.

"From the first year, feeding some of the fowls with grain and others with meat, he perceived that the latter appeared tamed and allowed themselves to be handled much sooner by the boy who took care of them. It must be acknowledged, however, that with all other persons the fowls remained wild. The boy was recognized by his white blouse. If he took it off he was no longer known, and any one who put it on could easily tame the fowls. One of these carnivorous fowls presented an interesting example of benevolence, or, if you please, of sociability. One of the chickens, on a summer evening took in its beak one of the morsels of meat and gave it, by thrusting its head through the grating, to its graminivorous neighbors, who showed their desire for it by their agitation.

"The clearest fact seemed to be the diminution and even the suppression of the sexual combativeness of the cocks, under this diet. The carnivorous cock would not attack the graminivorous cock when the latter was tied and placed in front of him, but the latter, when placed in the former's cage, attacked him with violence.—Literary Digest.

Plead Ignorance of Attorney.

Mr. Paul J. Quinn, of 2534 Madison avenue, who has recently returned from a southern trip, tells of an incident in the courtroom of a village in Alabama, where he was the guest of the state's attorney during a trial.

A prisoner who had been found guilty of larceny was arraigned before the judge to receive his sentence.

"Have you anything to say before sentence is passed?" asked the judge.

With his eyes resting upon the young attorney who had defended him he replied:

"Your Honor, there is only one request that I wish to make of you. That is in passing your sentence I wish that you would take into consideration the youthfulness and ignorance of my attorney."

A broad smile spread over the countenance of the judge as he calmly sentenced the prisoner to six months in jail, and the attorney for the defense, sliding his books and papers, hurriedly left the courtroom.—Baltimore Sun.

Wisdom's Whispers.

Women of sense and women of beauty find little cause for mutual admiration.

Some men give the chill to a sentiment before it is half uttered.

A woman's manners often give a false construction to her words.

Men like to regard themselves as liberal even if they are otherwise.

When a woman finds time to do nothing she doesn't seem satisfied with her occupation.

A man's enthusiasm will take on all kinds of fantastic forms and lead him into any act of folly.

Each woman is sure she deserves the very best sort of a husband and no trouble.

Married men rarely talk of a wife's peculiarities to their men friends.

Women accept a gift in the spirit of honest gratitude no matter how trifling.

Some men are made jealous quite as easily as are women.

His Limitations.

The petted young beauty in the carriage looked with dismay at the mud that lay between her and the sidewalk.

"I think it was Sir Walter Raleigh," she said, "that threw his cloak upon the ground on a certain memorable occasion in order that his queen might not get her shoes muddy."

"You're my queen all right," replied the young man in the case, "but if Sir Walter Raleigh had been a clerk on a salary of $15 a week he would have done exactly what I'm going to do."

Whereupon he carried her to the sidewalk—but he did it so nicely that she forgave him.—Chicago Tribune.

It's funny how horses and men differ. If a man has a fast son it generally ruins him, but when a horse has a fast descendant his fortune is made, and when he is put up at auction he sells for $15,000.—Puck.

The Pickle Fork—Why did the salt shaker?

The Butter Knife—Because she let the spoon holder.—Town Topics.

First American Coins.

The treasurer of the United States on May 6, 1903, redeemed two half-cent pieces. This is the first time in the history of the country than any such coins have been presented for redemption. It is more than a century since the first half-cent piece was coined and it is nearly fifty years since the government discontinued minting them.

Probably not one person in a thousand now living in the United States ever saw a half-cent piece.

The last annual report of the director of the mint, page 82, shows that 7,895,222 of these coins, representing $39,476.11 were issued. For almost half a century each annual report of the treasury department has included them among the "outstanding" obligations of the government.

The half-cent piece was the coin of the smallest denomination ever made by this country. It enjoys the distinction also of being the first coin issued and also the first whose denomination was discontinued. The United States mint was established in 1792, and copper half-cents and cents were issued in 1793. Half the total number of half cents issued were coined previous to 1810, after which year their coinage with few exceptions, was limited. None was coined for circulation from 1812 to 1824, nor from 1836 to 1848. Finally in 1857, their coinage, with that of the big copper cent, was discontinued. On account of their limited issue in the last years of their coinage they practically had disappeared from the channels of trade.

The needs of adopting the half cent as the lowest value computing factor for a coin were made in the early days of the republic. Colonial half-cents and British farthings of the same commercial value were then in circulation, and many articles were priced and sold sold in half cents. With the progress of the nation values rose and their use following the first decade of the century was almost entirely confined to multiples.

While all other discontinued types and denominations of United States coins have found oblivion, the half cent is the only one of which the treasury reports do not record some portion of the issue redeemed. This singular and unexplained fact has been one of frequent comment and inquiry from mint and treasury officials.

Large quantities of halfcents are to be found in the stocks of coin dealers. The most common dates are sold at a good premium and the extremely rare ones are worth their weight in gold.

Ferran Zarbe of St. Louis was the man who sent the two half cent pieces to Washington for redemption. He now prizes highly the little voucher calling for "one cent," which was sent to him with the amount of current coin in exchange for the two half cent pieces he had forwarded.—Gateway Magazine.

The Caller's Advantage.

Mrs. Wylkyns—Which shall we do tonight, call on the Dumleys or telephone them to come over here.

Mr. Wylkyns—Call on them, by all means. Then we can start for home when we like instead of having to wait for them to think of going.—Somerville Journal.

Slick Insurance Agent.

The modern insurance agent has a sort of painless method of extracting a policy. Here is one that works where a good many others fail:

Jones is an insurance agent and he meets Brown, who abhors solicitors of all kinds. Jones says:

"You are not looking well these days, Brown."

"That so? I didn't know it. What's the matter with me?"

"Well, you seem to be off color and underweight. I don't believe you could pass an examination for insurance."

Brown sniffs his contempt.

"I don't think you appreciate how strict insurance examinations are," said Jones mysteriously. "It is a good deal harder to get a $10,000 policy than to pass the physical examination for West Point."

"I can do it," says Brown, although not confidently. Jones has touched him in a tender spot, for he used to be a champion athlete.

"Go up to the office and see," says Jones. "You needn't take out any insurance. I just have a little curiosity to see whether you can pass."

Brown has a little curiosity on the subject, too, and he goes to the examination with a little anxiety. The company physician taps him over, weighs him and pronounces him a fine specimen of physical manhood."

And Brown is so pleased with his little triumph that he takes out a policy with Jones.—New York Press.

Policeman—What makes you think this dog was stolen from a lady.

Detective—Because I walked down Woodward avenue with it, and it stopped in front of all the store windows.—Detroit Free Press.

Mrs. Newrocks—Why, of course, Van Dyke was an artist.

Newrocks—I thought he was a barber.—Puck.

WAITING.

I walk with slow, hushed footsteps thro' the woods,
Such bare, brown woods, that only yesterday
Thrilled as the south wind stirred her drowsy leaves,
When glad-eyed June went singing on her way.
Like watchful sentinels the tall trees stand;
They know no haste, they fret not at delay.
Sure faith is theirs that, some day Love will come,
And where love is there abideth Spring alway.
What matters, then, gray sky and leafless bough?
Some day her throbbing heart will pulse in tune
With springing grasses and wee downy nests,
And leafy branches toss in winds of June.
With quick glad steps I walk the leaf-strewn aisles,
Where new, warm life shall blossom some sweet day;
Lo, I am made a sharer in your faith,
O bare, brown woods—and who shall say us nay?

—Florence A. Jones.

The Horse is Learning.

The horse is getting wise. He always was intelligent, but he has learned many things in the last few years. A really successful horse today must know a great many things not essential to those olden horses who did not live in electric-lighted stables or ride up and down stairs on an elevator and did not have their hair cut by electricity.

A horse to have a career today must not only have horse sense, but he must be acquainted with the ways of the world. He must be a "horse-of-the-world," or a "horse-about-town" if it be permissible to paraphrase "man-of-the-world" and "man-about-town." Nearly every horse is becoming an educated horse.

During the last few years the horse has been taking a course in the study of automobiles and already he has a very good understanding of the subject. Time was when a horse would forget his spavins, sore shoulders or quarter-crack and would jump a six-bar gate at sight of one of these monsters. Now he can walk up to an auto look it in the lamps and sniff its evil breath without breaking a trace or kicking in the dashboard. He can now meet one of these benzine-buggies on a lonely road and a dark night without throwing either a fit or his rider. The time may come when the horse and the auto will sleep in the same stable and drink from the same bucket.

There was the trolley car. A few years ago it was the abomination of every horse. Now the horse would feel positively lonesome if he had all the street to himself and did not have his wagon smashed now and then as a diversion.

The horse is learning.—Washington Star.

The Secretary Bird.

The secretary bird is a South African species though it is found as far north as sticks in low bushes or tangled underbrush. While sitting the female secretary is fed by her mate. The young mature in strength very slowly, seldom leaving the nest till six months old.

The secretary bird differs from the other members of the hawk family in its exceedingly long legs. It is a bird of prey, feeding on insects, small animals and reptiles and snakes being its favorite food. These reptiles are often of the most venomous kind, but of them the secretary feels no fear, attacking them with its great and powerful wings and beating them into helplessness, after which it swallows the victims whole and head foremost.

Owing to its value as a snake-eater, the secretary was carried in a great number to Martinique to help destroy the poisonous snakes that overrun that island.

Pearl Valued at $500,000.

The most extraordinary pearl—or, rather, cluster of pearls—known as the "Southern Cross," is owned by a syndicate of Australian gentlemen, who value it at $500,000, says the Jewelers' Circular Weekly. So far as is known, it occupies an absolutely unique position. It consists of nine pearls, naturally grown together in so regular a manner as to form a perfect Latin cross.

The pearl was discovered by a pearl fisher at Roebourne, West Australia. The first owner regarded it with so much superstition that he buried it, but it was discovered in 1874, and five years later was placed on exhibition in Australia.

Goldbugge—Have you any gilt-edged railroad stocks among your investments?

Copperbugge—No; but I've got a few all-gullt copper stocks.—Town Topics.

"Don't you think Miss Lingerlong's face looks rather worn?

"Well, she has been wearing it since 1868.—Town Topics.

HOW TO SELL A FARM.

One Method of Bringing a Hesitating Buyer to Terms.

"There are many ways of bringing a hesitating buyer up to the mark," said Lawyer John E. Kehoe; "but the way my friend and client, Tom Corrigan, of Du Page county, managed to sell his farm was about as unique as any.

"Tom was tired of farming in that particular section. He wanted to sell and get out, and his neighbor, Silas Barker, whose farm lay across the road from him, wanted just as badly to buy and get in. But Silas was a great hand at a bargain, and we kept waiting for Tom to come down to a price that would please him. This Tom was not inclined to do. The pair occasionally met; they casually referred to the matter, one trying to conceal that he was anxious to sell and the other that he was burning to buy, but they never seemed to come any nearer an agreement.

" 'Well, Mr. Barker,' said Tom at length, 'I think I've found a good buyer in view now for this farm of mine. Still, you being a neighbor, I'm willing to give you the preference.'

" 'What's your price today?' asked Silas.

" 'It's $500 more than it was last time,' replied Tom.

" 'I guess not,' said Barker.

"Next day Silas saw Tom conducting a Roman Catholic priest over the farm as if showing him its various points and advantages. On inquiry he got a whisper from a friend of Tom's that the latter was negotiating with Father Madigan, who wanted the place for a cemetery.

"For a cemetery! Right at his door, too! A cemetery, with hearses and carriages full of mourners, unloading almost at his very threshold every day, and bristling rows of tombstones to look out upon every night. This would be a sad upset to his cherished dream of amalgamating the two farms and owning one of the finest pieces of land in Du Page county.

"Very soon he sought out Tom Corrigan. 'Is it true that you're going to sell your farm to the priest?'

" 'That's my own business, Mr. Barker,' said Tom.

" 'And is it true that it's going to be made into a cemetery?'

" 'Faith, then, 'tis little I know or care what the buyer intends to make of it, so long as I get a good price for it.'

" 'Tom Corrigan, what's the price of your farm today?'

" 'It's $1,000 more than it was yesterday,' answered Tom.

" 'Well, then,' said Barker, 'I'll take it at that price.'

"And he took it. Now, the priest had no notion of booming Corigan's real estate with his innocent visit, so he was angry. But he was not so thoroughly disgusted as was Silas Barker when the latter discovered the trick by which Corrigan had sold his farm."—Chicago News.

Being Superstitious.

The foremost city of America is, oddly enough, the most superstitious. Robert Shackleton has gathered in New York a remarkable assortment of actual charms, spells, black art, all sorts of wizardry practiced there at this time, which he embodies in an entertaining article on "Superstition of a Cosmopolitan City" in Harper's Magazine for January. There are Wise Women who are called in to doctor the sick in East Side tenements, there is a Wall Street broker "who must have his right cheek shaved first and the initial stroke must be upward." Mr. Shackleford also refers to a New York financier, known over the civilized world, who "holds active superstitions in regard to cats." Superstitions, while they abound among foreigners, are not, it seems, confined to that element.

The Judge's Queer Customer.

A Southwest Georgia negro, to whom Judge Edwards, of Lee county, had issued a marriage license, called on the judge, recently, and said:

"Ef you please, suh, I wants ter be conjined."

"Why," said the judge—who understood what he was after—"you know, the Bible says that whatsoever the Lord has joined together, man must not put asunder?"

"Don't talk dat way, jedge," said the applicant for divorce, "you knows mighty well dat the Lawd didn't have nuttin' ter do wid it—hit wuz you dat fixed me!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Practice and Preaching.

Literary Lady (writing)—The most essential point in our intercourse with children is to be truthful ourselves. Every other interest ought to be sacrificed to that of truth.

Tommy—Mother, Mrs. Caller is coming in at the gate.

Mrs. Hetty Green does not seem to have the Carnegie idea about her will. She has recently refused to give a library to Wendell, where she was born.

It is better to figure in a breach of promise case than in a divorce suit.